

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 HELSINKI 1970

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FI, UR

SUBJECT: FINNISH-SOVIET RELATIONS: LOOKING BEHIND THE CURRENT
DEBATE

REF: A) HELSINKI 1865, B) HELSINKI 1800, C) MOSCOW 14194

1. SUMMARY: THE ONGOING PUBLIC DEBATE IN FINLAND SPARKED
BY THE RECENT SOVIET BOOK (REFTELS) IS WHETHER THE BOOK
CONSTITUTES A NEW AND MORE RESTRICTIVE SOVIET INTERPRETATION
OF THE TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP COOPERATION AND MUTUAL ASSISTANCE
(FCMA). COMPARING THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE BOOK WITH
A 1973 JOINT FINNISH-SOVIET DECLARATION (TO WHICH FONMIN
SORSA REFERRED IN A RECENT SPEECH AS THE VALID JOINT INTER-
PRETATION), THERE DO NOT APPEAR TO BE ANY SIGNIFICANT
DIFFERENCES. MOREOVER, THE 1973 JOINT DECLARATION SEEMS TO
FOLLOW THE PATTERN OF JOINT STATEMENTS OF RECENT YEARS.
HOWEVER, THE BOOK DOES TAKE A STRICTER INTERPRETATION OF
SOVIET-FINNISH RELATIONS THAN HAVE SOME UNILATERAL
STATEMENTS MADE IN FINLAND AND ABROAD IN RECENT YEARS
WHICH GO BEYOND OFFICIAL JOINT INTERPRETATIONS. THE
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KOMMISSAROV BOOK, THEN, SERVES AS AN UNPLEASANT

REMINDER TO FINNS OF THE HARDER REALITIES UNDERLYING
FINNISH-SOVIET RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE OSTENSIBLE ISSUE OF THE ONGOING PUBLIC DEBATE
IN FINLAND OVER FINNISH-SOVIET RELATIONS (REFTELS) IS
WHETHER THE NEW BOOK "THIRTY YEARS OF GOOD NEIGHBOR
RELATIONS" BY T. BARTENYEV AND Y. KOMMISSAROV CONSTI-
TUTES A NEW AND MORE RESTRICTIVE INTERPRETATION OF
FINNISH-SOVIET RELATIONS IN GENERAL AND OF THE FCMA
TREATY IN PARTICULAR. IN COMPARING VARIOUS "INTERPRE-
TATIONS OF FINNISH-SOVIET RELATIONS" IT IS NECESSARY
TO DISTINGUISH AMONG (A) UNILATERAL FINNISH INTERPRE-
TATIONS, OFFICIAL OR UNOFFICIAL, WHICH APPEAR FROM
TIME TO TIME; (B) FORMAL JOINT INTERPRETATIONS WHICH,
ALSO FROM TIME TO TIME, ARE ISSUED IN AGREED SOVIET-
FINNISH DOCUMENTS, AND (C) UNILATERAL SOVIET INTERPRE-
TATIONS, OFFICIAL OR QUASI-OFFICIAL, SUCH AS THE
KOMMISSAROV BOOK CURRENTLY IN QUESTION.

3. IN REFERRING TO THE BOOK IN HIS RECENT SPEECH
(REFTEL A), FOREIGN MINISTER SORSA SID NOT COMMENT
ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE BOOK'S POSITIONS; INSTEAD HE
SIMPLY DIRECTED THE ATTENTION OF THOSE INTERESTED IN
A VALID INTERPRETATION OF FINNISH-SOVIET RELATIONS TO
THE JOINT FINNISH-SOVIET DECLARATION OF APRIL 7, 1973
(AGAIN, HOWEVER, NOT REFERRING TO THE SUBSTANCE OF
THAT DECLARATION).

4. THE RELEVANT SECTIONS OF THE APRIL 7, 1973
DECLARATION READ: "IN MAKING THIS (FCMA) TREATY FIN-
LAND AND THE SOVIET UNION COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO
MUTUAL ASSISTANCE AS DECREED IN THE TREATY IN THE EVENT
THAT FINLAND OR THE SOVIET UNION THROUGH FINNISH TERRI-
TORY BECAME THE OBJECT OF ARMED AGRESSION. BY THESE
PROVISIONS THE TREATY... HAS BECOME A FOCAL FACTOR IN
GUARANTEEING FINLAND'S SECURITY AND THE INVIOABILITY
OF THE NORTHWESTERN FRONTIER OF THE USSR ... THE TREATY
HAS AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN STRENGTHENING THE SECURITY
OF NORTH EUROPE AND ALL EUROPE. ... BOTH PARTIES
STATED THAT THE BASIC COURSE OF FINLAND'S FOREIGN
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POLICY, THE PSSSIKIVI-KEKKONEN LINE, WHICH BY VIRTUE
OF THE FCMA TREATY ... ENSURES THE STEADFAST DEVELOP-
MENT OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION IN RELATIONS WITH
THE SOVIET UNION, CONTAINS FINLAND'S ENDEAVOR TO APPLY
A PEACE-LOVING POLICY OF NEUTRALITY FOR THE BENEFIT
OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY AND FOR THE MAINTEN-
ANCE OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH ALL COUNTRIES. IT IS
CONFIRMED ON THE PART OF FINLAND THAT FINLAND IS

NATURALLY NOT NEUTRAL IN QUESTIONS OF WAR AND PEACE,
BUT IS FOR PEACE AGAINST WAR."

5. COMPARING THE 1973 STATEMENT TEXT WITH THE
QUOTATIONS FROM THE KOMMISSAROV BOOK (REFTEL B, PARA
3) THERE DO NOT IN FACT APPEAR TO BE ANY SIGNIFICANT
DIFFERENCES, EVEN TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE IMPORTANCE
OF NUANCES IN QUESTIONS OF THIS NATURE. EACH STATE-
MENT REFERS TO FINLAND'S MUTUAL ASSISTANCE OBLIGA-
TIONS WITH RESPECT BOTH TO FINNISH TERRITORY AND TO
THE SOVIET UNION'S NORTHWESTERN BORDER AND EACH
LINKS FINLAND'S NEUTRALITY ENDEAVORS TO THE NEED TO
MAINTAIN FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION IN RELATIONS WITH
THE SOVIET UNION. EACH STATEMENT CLEARLY NOTES THERE
ARE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH FINLAND WOULD NATURALLY NOT
BE NEUTRAL.

6. PREVIOUS JOINT OFFICIAL STATEMENTS IN PAST YEARS
APPEAR TO HAVE FOLLOWED ESSENTIALLY THE SAME PATTERN
IN RELATING FINNISH NEUTRALITY TO THE MUTUAL ASSISTANCE
PROVISIONS OF THE 1948 TREATY AND TO THE NEED FOR
GOOD NEIGHBORLY RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, AL-
THOUGH A HELSINGIN SANOMAT COLUMNIST NOTED ON SEPT 7
THAT IN SOME DOCUMENTS THE CONNECTION HAS NOT ALWAYS
BEEN EXPLICIT.

7. WHILE THE KOMMISSAROV BOOK, THEN, IS NOT INCON-
SISTENT WITH FORMAL JOINT FINNISH-SOVIET INTERPRETA-
TIONS OF THE TREATY, IT IS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM --
AND TAKES EXCEPTION WITH -- SOME UNILATERAL FINNISH
INTERPRETATIONS. THE BOOK NOTES THAT IN RECENT
YEARS WRITERS, POLITICIANS AND MILITARY PERSONS IN
FINLAND AND THE WEST HAVE OFFERED THE INTERPRETATION
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THAT THE NEUTRALITY PROVISION REPRESENTS THE CENTRAL
ASPECT OF THE TREATY. "FROM THIS HAS BEEN DRAWN THE
CONCLUSION THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT OBLIGATION SET
FORTH IN THE TREATY FOR FINLAND'S PART IS THAT FINLAND
MUST BE AND REMAIN NEUTRAL IN ALL SITUATIONS," AN
INTERPRETATION WHICH THE BOOK REJECTS. THE AUTHORS
QUOTE AND REJECT A CONCLUSION IN MAX JAKOBSON'S BOOK
"FINNISH NEUTRALITY" THAT "THE OBJECT OF THE TREATY
IN THE SOVIET VIEW PRIMARILY IS TO GUARANTEE THAT
FINLAND IN THE EVENT OF A CONFLICT BETWEEN EAST AND
WEST SHALL NOT DEPART FROM ITS POSITION OF NEUTRALITY."

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 HELSINKI 1970

MAX JAKOBSON IN HIS OWN ARTICLE COMMENTING ON THE SOVIET BOOK STATES "THE MOST RECENT OFFICIAL FINNISH INTERPRETATION OF THE FRIENDSHIP PACT IS INCLUDED IN THE REPORT COMPLETED BY THE SECOND PARLIAMENTARY DEFENSE COMMITTEE IN JUNE THIS YEAR. THE REPORT OBSERVED THAT FINLAND IN A POSSIBLE SITUATION OF CRISIS, WHICH WOULD CONCERN FINNISH TERRITORY AND THEREBY ALSO AFFECT SOVIET SECURITY INTERESTS 'WILL BY PRESERVING ITS POSITION OF NEUTRALITY, SEEK TO STAY OUT OF ANY CONFLICT UNDER DEVELOPMENT, IN ORDER TO AVOID BECOMING EXPOSED TO MILITARY OPERATIONS.'" WHILE THE JAKOBSON AND PARLIAMENTARY DEFENSE COMMITTEE UNILATERAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE 1948 TREATY AND THE SCOPE ALLOWED FOR FINNISH NEUTRALITY UNDOUBTEDLY WOULD BE SUPPORTED BY THE VAST MAJORITY OF FINNS, THEY DO NOT APPEAR REALISTIC WHEN VIEWED AGAINST THE RECORD OF PAST WORLD WAR II FINNISH-SOVIET RELATIONS OR WHEN COMPARED TO JOINT SOVIET-FINNISH STATEMENTS INTERPRETING THE TWO COUNTRIES' RELATIONS. THE KOMMISSAROV BOOK, THEN, CONTRASTS NOT WITH PREVIOUS OFFICIAL JOINT INTERPRETATIONS BUT RATHER WITH SOME UNILATERAL STATE-

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MENTS AND INTERPRETATIONS MADE IN FINLAND WHICH GO BEYOND OFFICIAL JOINT INTERPRETATIONS. THIS CONCLUSION IS CONSISTENT WITH THE USEFUL APPRAISALS REPORTED BY EMBASSY MOSCOW (REFTEL C).

8. IF THE KOMMISSAROV BOOK IS STANDARD OFFICIAL INTERPRETATION, WHY WAS THERE SUCH EXTENSIVE PRESS AND PUBLIC INTEREST IN FINLAND IN THE PUBLICATION OF THE BOOK AND APPARENT DISMAY IN SOME CIRCLES OVER SOME OF ITS CONTENTS? THE PROBABLE ANSWER IS THAT MANY FINNS WOULD LIKE TO BELIEVE THAT THE KIND OF INDEPENDENT NEUTRALITY SUGGESTED BY JAKOBSON IS IN FACT A VIABLE FOREIGN POLICY ALTERNATIVE FOR FINLAND, OR MAY EVEN BELIEVE THAT IT DOES IN FACT CONSTITUTE CURRENT FINNISH FOREIGN POLICY. PARADOXICALLY, WHILE PRESIDENT KEKKONEN AND HIS ADVISERS OBVIOUSLY DO NOT SHARE JAKOBSON'S VIEWS, THEY MAY THEMSELVES CONTRIBUTE TO AN AIR OF UNREALITY AMONG THE FINNISH POPULATION CONCERNING THE REAL STATE OF FINNISH-SOVIET RELATIONS WHEN THEY TIRELESSLY EMPHASIZE PUBLICLY THE CONCEPT OF FINNISH NEUTRALITY WITHOUT ACKNOWLEDGING THAT FINLAND'S OBLIGATIONS TO THE SOVIET UNION MAY TO SOME DEGREE CONSTRAIN THAT NEUTRALITY. ALSO, EXTERNAL STATEMENTS SUCH AS A RECENT NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY ITEM CONDEMNING THE USSR FOR TIGHTENING ITS INTERPRETATION OF FINNISH NEUTRALITY MAY INFLUENCE SOME SECTORS OF FINNISH OPINION.

9 THE KOMMISSAROV BOOK, HOWEVER, SERVES TO REMIND FINNS OF THE HARDER REALITIES UNDERLYING FINNISH-SOVIET RELATIONS AND FINNISH FOREIGN POLICY, AND JUDGING FROM THE REACTION OF MANY FINNS, THE REALITIES AFTER ALL THESE YEARS ARE STILL DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND WHY AT THIS TIME IT WAS DEEMED ADVISABLE IN THE SOVIET UNION TO PUBLISH A BOOK THAT WOULD HAVE A GENERAL AND PREDICTABLE NEGATIVE REACTION IN FINLAND, THAT WOULD TARNISH TO SOME DEGREE THE CREDIBILITY OF FINLAND'S POLICY OF ACTIVE NEUTRALITY, AND THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE SOMEWHAT OF AN EMBARRASSMENT TO PRESIDENT KEKKONEN.
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